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REBIRTH OF THE KARMA DOCTRINE

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Mumbai

2010

Contents

Chapter 1
Introduction

We experience certain phenomena so often that we do not consider it necessary to look for explanations of their occurrence. They seem so natural that we never give them any thought. For example, we are aware that something that slips from our hands never goes up but always goes down, though it rarely occurs us to look for the explanation of why things always go down (many of us do not actually understand the law of gravity). We are told about the births of so many children, but we never ask the question why they are here. We observe in our daily life that no two living beings are identical, but we rarely ask why they are different (many of us have little understanding of genetics).

Living beings are physically dissimilar from each other, and we make use of this fact to identify different living beings. It is not difficult to differentiate among plants, animals, and human beings because the forms of their bodies are different from each other. However, this fact cannot be used to make distinctions between identical twins or among clones. In spite of physical similarity between identical twins or among clones, there are functional dissimilarities between them, and we make use of this fact to differentiate between them. In other words, living beings are different from each other because they perform different functions or deeds.

This principle implies that the deeds of a person make him or her unique. Our deeds determine what we are. Put another way, living beings are the consequence of their deeds. It must therefore be the law of nature that every deed has consequences and the doer of the deed has to bear them. In other words the doctrine "What you sow, so you

reap" is based on the laws of nature; hence, no one can violate it. No wonder almost all religions in the world preach this doctrine. In Indian religions, this doctrine is known as the "karma doctrine."

Though the karma doctrine seems logical, most people are skeptical about it. The possible reason for their skepticism is the inadequate understanding of the doctrine due to the unavailability of a logical and realistic explanation of the karma doctrine. One of the fundamental misgivings about the karma doctrine is related to the "administration" of its system. In other words, who controls the system of the karma doctrine and how it is governed? Answers to such queries have been sought for many centuries and attempts are still being made. There exist two schools of thought that address the question of administration. One school does not believe in rebirth and the other does. The followers of Judaism, Christianity, and Islam belong to the first school, while the followers of Hinduism, Buddhism, and Jainism belong to the second school.

Though the followers of the first school do not believe in rebirth, they believe in a Day of Judgment when all dead souls are resurrected and the consequences of their deeds are delivered. The followers of this school believe in the existence of a supreme power that is called Jehovah, God, or Allah. This supreme power is the creator of the universe and governs the system of the karma doctrine.

Though the dilemma of understanding the system of the karma doctrine is circumvented by leaving its administration to the supreme power, the invocation of the supreme entity for administering the system of the karma doctrine raises more questions than it answers. It fails to provide proper answers to the questions related to the vast heterogeneity in

economic, social, mental, and physical conditions in this world. Why are some people born healthy while others ill, some beautiful while others ugly, some intelligent while others stupid, some strong while others weak, some rich while others poor, and so on?

The second school presumes reincarnation as a fact of life and explains it with the karma doctrine. The original teachings of the karma doctrine are believed to be conceived by learned sages with knowledge beyond the senses, and their statements command unswerving faith. Such unwavering faith does not permit anybody to question their statements. But in the present scientific age one cannot have faith in the karma doctrine just because of the statement in scriptures that the karma doctrine is propounded by the sages with infinite wisdom. Faith in the karma doctrine without examining it with the touchstone of logic would be considered superstition.

The karma doctrine is the most misunderstood, and therefore most controversial, contribution by Indian sages in the field of metaphysics. The misinterpretation of the karma doctrine is due to the ignorance of the reality that all consequences of deeds are not governed by the laws of nature and hence the karma doctrine. Consequently, most existing versions of the karma doctrine in the author's experience suffer from inconsistencies, some more and some less, and none of them is coherent and completely acceptable.

Though numerous books have been written on the karma doctrine, the logical answers to many questions are not readily accessible in them. Some of the questions are:

1. Is the karma doctrine applicable to human beings only?
2. Is the karma doctrine universal and eternal?

3. Is the karma doctrine based on empirical evidence?
4. Is the karma doctrine self-regulating or administered by a supreme power?
5. Are the consequences of a deed borne by the doer of the deed only?
6. Are the consequences of a deed borne in future lives? How is the doer of a deed recognized in future lives?
7. Where do the consequences of a deed reside?
8. Can the consequences of a deed be avoided?
9. Is the karma doctrine deterministic?
10. Is "untimely" death due to past deeds?

The average person cannot find, and therefore does not know, the answers to these questions; consequently he or she has either incomplete or erroneous knowledge of the karma doctrine.

The objectives of this study are: to overcome the indifference of the skeptics towards the karma doctrine; to provide logical answers to unresolved questions related to the karma doctrine; to transform superstition to logical understanding of the karma doctrine; and to fill the gaps in the knowledge of the karma doctrine. These objectives cannot be achieved by carrying out a comparative study of the existing versions of the karma doctrine, as all previous versions of the karma doctrine in the author's experience suffer from inconsistencies. An entirely new approach is needed to clarify the karma doctrine and its logical underpinnings.

In the absence of a consistent model of the karma doctrine, the objectives can be achieved only by developing a conceptual and metaphysical model of the karma doctrine

which is coherent and devoid of contradictions. Such a model is metaphysical in the sense that it is based on abstract general reasons using logic. This model is developed herein with a unique interpretation of the karma doctrine. The author believes that the coherent and logical model of the karma doctrine should instill in the skeptics understanding and confidence in the karma doctrine.

A scientific procedure has been followed in developing the metaphysical model of the karma doctrine. A set of presuppositions, essential for the metaphysical model, are expounded first. The correct interpretation of the question, "What are the constituents of living beings?" leads to the presuppositions that living beings are composed of two eternal substances, namely, matter and soul. These presuppositions are used to develop the metaphysical model. It is argued that some, but not all, consequences of a deed are governed by the karma doctrine. The consequences of deeds are divided into two categories: invisible consequences of deeds that are governed by the karma doctrine; and visible consequences of deeds that are not governed by the karma doctrine. The metaphysical model of the karma doctrine that deals with the invisible consequences of deeds is developed. The interaction between the visible consequences of deeds and the metaphysical model of the karma doctrine is elucidated.

There are some fundamental differences between the metaphysical model of the karma doctrine proposed herein and the Hindu and Buddhist karma doctrines. The metaphysical model is independent of a moral 'administrator', i.e. God, and is based on the presupposition that one of the constituents of living being is soul. In contrast, the karma doctrine of Hinduism teaches that God administers the karma doctrine, while the karma doctrine of Buddhism denies the

existence of the soul. Due to these fundamental differences, this metaphysical model of the karma doctrine is distinct from the karma doctrine of Hinduism and Buddhism. This model is akin to the karma doctrine propounded by Jainism, because the presuppositions of the metaphysical model are in conformity with Jain ideology. However, there is a significant difference between their explanations. The karma doctrine in Jain philosophy is believed to be conceived by a *kevalin* (who has attained perfect knowledge) with infinite knowledge, and his statements command unswerving faith. In contrast, this metaphysical model is developed using a scientific approach centered entirely on logic and reasoning. Hence, the model put forward here is a novel one. It will eventually be put to the test by applying it to explain unresolved questions related to the karma doctrine.

Although the language that a lay person can understand has been used in explaining the metaphysical model of the karma doctrine, it has, nevertheless, been necessary to introduce a few technical terms in Sanskrit. These terms are italicized and defined at the point of their initial appearance.

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Chapter 2
Metaphysical Presuppositions

The laws in most branches of knowledge are based on presuppositions that are considered to be true, or else the laws would be meaningless. This is true of the karma doctrine. Because the karma doctrine is related to living beings, the presuppositions are hidden in the answer to the question, "What are the constituents of living beings?" The answer to this question provides the necessary presuppositions for the development of the metaphysical model of the karma doctrine.

We all know one constituent of the universe, namely, matter which is perceptible to us with our senses and modern scientific instruments. All living beings have a body. Everyone, including secularists, spiritualists, and scientists, agrees that the bodies of living beings are composed of living matter. But are living beings composed of matter only, or is there another constituent in addition to matter? The answer to this question has crucial implications to the karma doctrine.

We will use a term 'substance' instead of constituent. This term carries a specific connotation. Substance is that which exists, or which is characterized by simultaneous origination, destruction and permanence, or which has attributes and modes. (The term mode is explained later with an illustration.)

Let us examine how these definitions of substance are applicable to matter. One of the characteristics of matter is that it can neither be created nor destroyed. Logically, something which exists cannot become non-existent, and that which is non-existent cannot exist. In other words,

matter is eternal. It has a capacity by which it always exists. All substances that constitute the universe always exist; hence, they are eternal.

Another characteristic of matter is that it is constantly undergoing modification. All the entities that surround us are different forms of matter and all of them are undergoing changes, some at imperceptible rates and others at noticeable rates. In other words, matter has a capacity by which it is always changing. But matter during modification remains matter; it does not lose its intrinsic attributes and does not become non-matter. Permanence signifies persistence of the intrinsic attributes and change refers to the destruction of the old mode and the origination of the new mode. Matter possesses countless attributes, but four intrinsic attributes which can be recognized with our senses are touch, taste, smell, and color. These attributes are always present in matter, but the mode of these attributes changes constantly. Consider as an example the pages of a book, which are made of matter. The four attributes of matter are always present in them, but the mode of these attributes change continually as the pages turn brittle to the touch and yellowish in color. Their smell and taste also change with time.

Let us go back to the question related to the substances that constitute living beings. As stated earlier, matter has four attributes of touch, taste, smell, and color. Since our bodies are made of living matter, they also have these four attributes. The living matter of our bodies also has additional attributes, such as respiration and sensuous capabilities, etc. Why are there more attributes in living matter than nonliving matter? Are we able to introduce these additional attributes of living matter in nonliving matter? Is there a need of a substance other than matter which acts as a catalyst to

introduce the additional attributes of living matter into nonliving matter? If so, what is the nature of the other substance? If it is not matter, it is nonphysical. It, then, cannot be recognized by our senses and cannot be subjected to experiments; hence, it does not fall within the domain of science. The existence of a nonphysical substance can be inferred only by logical reasoning and indirect empirical evidence. This mental process is likely to initiate skepticism, but we can minimize or even circumvent skepticism by making use of careful logical reasoning.

If we presume that living beings are composed of matter only, as some scientists do, the answer to our question, then, is that life is a mere accidental combination of appropriate chemical elements. In this view, nonliving matter under proper conditions transforms into living matter which has the ability to metabolize, grow, and reproduce. The main constituents of the living matter are nucleic acids, proteins, carbohydrates, and lipids, which scientists now are able to synthesize from nonliving matter. Deoxyribonucleic acid, or DNA, stores genetic data as sequences of nucleotides that dictate many characteristics which constitute living matter. These constituents cannot be considered living matter, as they cannot grow or reproduce by themselves. As of 2010, scientists are able to transform nonliving constituents into living constituents in living cells only, not in test tubes. This piece of information implies that there exists a substance in living cells which does not exist in test tube environment. Only time will tell whether scientists are able to transform nonliving constituents into living constituents in test tubes and identify the other substance in living cells.

As living beings we also have the capabilities of knowing, feeling, and willing; in other words we have

consciousness. Can consciousness be explained in physical terms? Scientists and philosophers consider consciousness as one of the characteristics of mind. They are divided into two groups on the issue of ontology of mind. One group considers mind a part of the body; hence, it is made of living matter. The other group believes that there are two types of mind: physical mind and nonphysical mind. The physical mind is characterized by what it does, while the nonphysical mind is characterized by the way it feels as conscious experience. Several sources of empirical evidence support the existence of the nonphysical mind. Three main sources are: remembrance of past lives, out-of-body and near-death experiences, and messages from the dead received by a medium. We will describe only the studies related to the remembrance of past lives as the quality and explanation of the evidence is more convincing on this subject.

A number of studies on past lives have been conducted. The most comprehensive study has been done by the American psychologist Ian Stevenson of the University of Virginia, who spent over 40 years studying children who have spoken about past lives. In each case Stevenson methodically documented the children's statements. Then he identified the deceased person with whom the child allegedly identified, and verified the facts of the deceased person's life that matched the child's memory. From his studies, published from 1960 to 2003, he concluded that the phenomenon of rebirth is the best explanation for the child's memories. The mountain of evidence accumulated on this subject has permitted some scientists to conclude that rebirth is a legitimate phenomenon.

It seems reasonable to conclude that the following questions are unsolvable by experimental science. Why does DNA work only in living cells, not in test tubes? No doubt

the brain is the main instrument for perception, judgment, memory, etc., but who feels the emotions of love, fear, etc.? More than one thousand cases of persons who have given account of their previous lives have been reported, but who remembers the events of the past life? Until or unless the scientists are able to supply answers to these questions and are able to introduce consciousness and the additional attributes of living matter into nonliving matter, we will have to work on the following premises:

1. Consciousness is not an attribute of matter.
2. Living beings are not made of matter only.
3. A nonphysical substance that has attributes different from those of matter is one of the constituents of living beings. The nonphysical substance is termed "soul."
4. We have a physical mind, referred to hereinafter as simply "mind."

As soul is presumed to be a substance, it has attributes and capacities by which it always exists and undergoes modification. The attributes of the soul, in addition to consciousness, are described in the next chapter.

It should be pointed out that every substance has some intrinsic attributes that make one substance distinct from the other. For example, matter has the intrinsic attributes of touch, taste, smell, and color, which the soul does not have, and the soul has the intrinsic attribute of consciousness, which matter does not have. Every substance during modification keeps its intrinsic attributes and does not transform into another substance. Matter does not transform into soul and soul does not transform into matter. Matter always remains matter and soul always remains soul.

We now have the answer to the question raised at the beginning of this chapter, provided we accept the presupposition that living beings are composed of two eternal substances, namely soul and matter. But there are those who believe that the universe is composed of matter only. These skeptics have raised several issues related to the identity of the soul. The main question is "What fundamentally distinguishes different disembodied souls from one another?" The metaphysical model of the karma doctrine developed in this study attempts to furnish the answer to this query.

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Chapter 3
Matter and Soul

The karma doctrine deals with living beings which are composed of matter and soul. Both matter and soul have attributes. The knowledge of their attributes, which is essential for the development of the metaphysical model of the karma doctrine, is summarized in this chapter. For our discussion, matter and soul and their attributes are each divided into two categories: living and nonliving matter; pure and mundane soul; and intrinsic and extrinsic attributes.

Matter that has association with soul is termed living matter; otherwise, it is nonliving matter. Bodies of living beings are made of living matter, as they have association with soul. The remaining matter in the universe has no association with soul; hence, it is nonliving matter. Similarly, a soul that has association with matter is termed mundane soul; otherwise, it is a pure soul. Souls of living beings are considered mundane souls, as they have association with matter. A mundane soul always has been in a state of transmigration in the past and remains in a state of transmigration until it liberates itself from association with matter and transforms into a pure soul. The purpose of human life is to achieve liberation by transforming the imperfect mundane soul into a perfect pure soul.

The attributes that are always present in a substance are termed intrinsic attributes. Matter, living as well as nonliving, possesses four intrinsic attributes of touch, taste, smell, and color. These intrinsic attributes are always present in it; in fact, matter cannot exist without these four intrinsic attributes. Similarly, soul has an intrinsic attribute of consciousness and it cannot exist without this attribute.

Moreover, matter that has association with a soul and a soul that has association with matter—i.e. living matter and mundane soul—have some additional attributes that are termed extrinsic attributes. A substance can exist without extrinsic attributes. For example, the living matter of the body of a person has extrinsic attributes, but it loses its extrinsic attributes at the time of death and transforms into nonliving matter with no extrinsic attributes. Similarly a mundane soul has an extrinsic attribute, which it loses when it transforms into a pure soul.

It is easy to identify the intrinsic and extrinsic attributes of matter as they are recognized by our senses. As stated earlier, matter possesses four intrinsic attributes that are recognized by our senses. These attributes are touch, taste, smell, and color. The living matter of our bodies possesses ten extrinsic attributes: we have the three capabilities of physical action of mind, speech, and body; five sensuous capabilities of touch, taste, smell, vision, and hearing; the capability of respiration that is required to metabolize; and the capability of age, as we have a certain life span. All these ten capabilities (mind, speech, body, touch, taste, smell, vision, hearing, respiration and age) are the ten extrinsic attributes of living matter. We can recognize all these extrinsic attributes with our senses.

Not all living beings have all ten extrinsic attributes, but all of them do have at least four extrinsic attributes, namely one capability of physical action of body, one sensuous capability of touch, the capability of respiration, and the capability of age. Living beings can be classified according to the number of their senses that range from one to five. Only five-sensed living beings have a mind. Living beings like humans, cows, lions, birds, and fish have all

five senses and all ten extrinsic attributes. Living beings like reptiles, bees, and flies do not have the sense of hearing and thus have only four senses; therefore they have only eight extrinsic attributes, lacking both mind and a sense of hearing. Living beings like bugs, ants, and spider do not have the senses of hearing and vision and have only three senses; therefore, they have only seven extrinsic attributes. Living beings like worms, shells, and leeches have only two senses of touch and taste; therefore, they have six extrinsic attributes. Living beings like plants have only one sense of touch and one type of physical action of body; therefore, they have the minimum extrinsic attributes of four.

It should be pointed out that senses have a hierarchy, starting from touch, then taste, smell, vision, and finally hearing. Any living being with the sense of hearing has to have the senses of vision, smell, taste, and touch; with the sense of vision has to have the senses of smell, taste, and touch; with the sense of smell has to have the senses of taste and touch; and with the sense of taste has to have the sense of touch. Similarly, the instruments of physical actions also have a hierarchy, starting from body, then speech and finally mind. Any living being with speech has to have body; and with mind has to have speech and body. It should be pointed out that the mind is made of living matter and is different from the brain. The mind serves as a memory bank. In computer jargon, the mind is a "hard disk" to store the information, while the brain serves as the "central processing unit."

Recognizing the attributes of a soul is not as easy as that of matter. It was straightforward to identify the attributes of matter as they could be perceived through our senses.

The soul is non-physical and imperceptible to our senses, so we must resort to logical reasoning to infer the attributes of a soul. We will first identify the attributes of a mundane soul, as all of us have a mundane soul. Once we grasp the attributes of a mundane soul, we can then infer the attributes of a pure soul from the attributes of the mundane soul.

We know at least one characteristic of the soul, namely, consciousness. According to psychologists, consciousness has three faculties: cognition, affection, and conation. Cognition includes the abilities of perception and knowledge. Affection refers to the emotions such as love, attachment, fear, aversion, and others. Conation includes the ability to make decisions and various tendencies to construct and learn that engage living beings into physical action. The three faculties of consciousness can be demonstrated with an illustration. Consider that you are strolling in the woods and a wild dog runs towards you. Feeling threatened, you climb a nearby tree. All three faculties of consciousness are present in this illustration. Your perception and knowledge of the dog are the aspects of cognition. Your feeling of fear and desire not to get injured are the aspects of affection. Your decision and metaphysical effort to climb the tree, as well as your physical action of actually climbing the tree, are the aspects of conation.

Consciousness, of course, is not an entity that can be divided into parts; its division above is carried out only to illustrate its characteristics.

All three aspects of consciousness are essential for the performance of a deed. You might not have performed the deed of climbing the tree unless you had perception and knowledge of the dog. Cognition is necessary for the performance of the deed, but it is not a sufficient condition.

The presence of cognition does not ensure the performance of the deed. Even with the presence of cognition, a deed cannot be performed in the absence of affection. You might not have climbed the tree without experiencing fear and desire not to get injured. Even with the presence of both cognition and affection, a deed cannot be performed in the absence of conation. Even with the knowledge of the dog and the feeling of fear, you could not have climbed the tree without the resolution and metaphysical effort. The physical action of climbing the tree is due to the extrinsic attributes of living matter.

A mundane soul has many attributes, but the attributes that are essential for the three faculties of consciousness are considered herein. Two attributes of the mundane soul can be recognized with cognition: perception, that is, first contact, or instinct awareness, or simple cognition without interpretation; and knowledge, that is, comprehending the details of what has been perceived. Cognition includes both perception and knowledge.

The third attribute of the mundane soul concerns the faculty of conation and is related to willpower, which a person uses to control desires. Willpower is not physical power, as a physically weak person could be equally or more capable of controlling desires than a physically strong person. Willpower is a metaphysical effort whose nature is different than that of physical effort. If willpower is not power resulting from matter, then it has to be power from the soul. Willpower, or metaphysical effort, is spiritual power or effort. It manifests as resolution, decisiveness, and determination and is also related to self control. This attribute of the mundane soul is termed "*virya.*" The resolution of climbing the tree in the above illustration is due to *virya.*

Another attribute of the mundane soul that results in affection can be identified by finding the root cause of desires. The root cause of development of desires in a living being is the false view of oneness between the soul and the body. The embodied mundane being does not discriminate between its soul and its body and has a wrong belief that "I am this body." Due to false perception, the mundane being develops desires for all the things concerned with the body and remains engrossed in attachment to worldly objects and gratification of senses. False perception results in desires, which lead to attachment and aversion. Attachment is the desire for agreeable things and aversion is the hatred for disagreeable things. The attribute of misperception-cum-attachment/aversion is termed *moha* (delusion).

It is shown later that a mundane soul loses the attribute of *moha* when it reaches the pinnacle of its "spiritual advancement" and transforms into a pure soul. The state of devoid of *moha* of the soul is termed bliss and is related to its self-contained nature. The attribute of bliss of the soul is completely obscured by *moha* and it manifests only when the soul sets free itself from *moha*. It is not easy to recognize bliss as hardly any of us experience it in our life.

The five attributes of a mundane soul briefly discussed above are perception, knowledge, *virya*, *moha*, and bliss. We can infer the attributes of a pure soul from the attributes of the mundane soul. Because consciousness is the attribute of a soul, it is logical to assume that a soul must have the faculty of cognition; consequently a pure soul has the attributes of perception and knowledge. Moreover a pure soul being a perfect soul must have perfect perception and

perfect knowledge. A person uses willpower to control desires. A person with weak willpower has too many desires as he or she is unable to control his or her desires. A person needs an unlimited willpower to control all his or her desires. A pure soul, therefore, must have unlimited *virya* as it has no desire. A pure soul is devoid of *moha*, and, therefore, has the attribute of bliss. In summary, a pure soul has perfect perception, perfect knowledge, unlimited *virya* and unending bliss.

The four attributes of perception, knowledge, *virya*, and bliss are the attributes of the mundane soul as well as the pure soul. These attributes are then the intrinsic attributes of a soul as it cannot exist without them. The attribute of *moha* is an extrinsic attribute of the soul, as the soul can exist without this attribute.

All living beings belong to one sentient class from a genus point of view and are all identical from the viewpoint of the intrinsic attributes. Yet the manifestation of these intrinsic attributes, except the intrinsic attribute of bliss, is not the same in all living beings; in fact, this is the only major difference amongst them. The manifestation of these attributes in human beings is comparatively greater in intensity. Among the animals and birds it is lesser than human beings; in flies and ants still less; among plants and trees even less than flies; and in microbes it is still less ? so much less they cannot feel the manifestation of consciousness. However, there is never a time when a soul is without some level of these attributes. When a mundane soul is no longer associated with matter, it develops into a pure soul and attains the state of a supreme being

The presuppositions for the metaphysical model of the karma doctrine are the following:

1. Living beings are composed of living matter and the mundane soul.

2. Living matter has up to ten extrinsic attributes, namely: capabilities of touch, taste, smell, vision, and hearing; capabilities of action of body, speech, and mind; capability of respiration; and capability of age.

3. A soul has four intrinsic attributes of perception, knowledge, *virya*, and bliss and one extrinsic attribute of *moha*.

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Chapter 4
Deeds and Consequences

The karma doctrine is a law of cause and effect, which implies that every deed has consequences. A deed is the cause and its consequences are the effect. The deed is an intentional, voluntary action and includes both the physical action of mind, speech and body and the spiritual action steered by *moha* that includes intention, motivation, desire, etc. *Moha* is the significant component of the deed. Generally, the consequences of a deed are considered in the form of punishment only. But here the consequences of a deed have a broader meaning in that they include both rewards as well as punishments for deeds. The wage a person receives for his or her deed in the form of vocation is an example of a consequence as reward. Similarly, the incarceration one experiences because of his or her deed of theft, adultery, etc is the example of a consequence as punishment. Therefore, consequences of deeds can be both punishments and rewards.

Living beings perform deeds at all times. For the karma doctrine to be meaningful, it should be valid all the time and everywhere in the universe where living beings reside. In other words, the karma doctrine should be universal and eternal, based on the laws of nature and, therefore, not able to be violated by any living being. If the karma doctrine is universal and eternal, then the laws that govern the relationship between a deed and its consequences also are universal and eternal. Therefore, the consequences of a deed should depend only on the deed, not on the time and place of the deed. Whether the deed is performed in the U.S. or in India, or somewhere else in the universe, its consequences should be identical. Likewise, whether the deed was performed in the past, or is performed now, or

will be performed in the future, its consequences have to be identical. In other words, the consequences of deeds that are governed by the karma doctrine are universal and eternal.

The consequences of deeds in the form of the wages or incarceration, for example, are neither universal nor eternal. They are different in different countries and they were different in the past and shall be different in the future. Such consequences are not governed by the karma doctrine which deals only with universal and eternal consequences. We can conclude that not all consequences of deeds are governed by the karma doctrine.

Here we consider two types of consequences of deeds: one type is universal and eternal, termed invisible consequences of deeds; and another type is neither universal nor eternal, termed visible consequences of deeds. Only invisible consequences of deeds are governed by the karma doctrine; they are universal and eternal. The consequences of deeds in the form of rewards and punishments in the examples mentioned above are not universal and eternal; they are the visible consequences governed by man-made laws, not by the karma doctrine. Some of us have probably never thought about the fact that visible consequences of deeds are not controlled by the karma doctrine. Some of us probably have difficulty in identifying even one invisible consequence of deeds.

What is the nature of invisible consequences of deeds that are governed by the karma doctrine? Let us consider a deed which has only invisible consequences. For instance, suppose somebody decides to commit a wrongdoing and spends several days planning it. Will the person experience consequences for planning the wrongdoing? This deed surely will have consequences, as we have learned that every deed has consequences. If there is no physical

evidence of this deed, the consequences of this deed cannot be dealt with by man-made laws. In this case such a deed then has no visible consequences; it has only invisible consequences.

Invisible consequences of deeds affect living beings that perform those deeds. And living beings are composed of a mundane soul and living matter. Therefore, invisible consequences of deeds should affect the attributes of the mundane soul and living matter. Invisible consequences of deeds are such that they affect the manifestation of the intrinsic and extrinsic attributes of the mundane soul, namely, perception, knowledge, *virya*, and *moha* (bliss is completely obscured by *moha*); and affect the extrinsic attributes of living matter, namely, senses, instruments of action, respiration, and age. The attributes of the mundane soul and living matter are universal and eternal and the invisible consequences of deeds that affect these attributes are, therefore, universal and eternal.

Carrier of Invisible Consequences of Deeds

Before discussing the invisible consequences of deeds in more detail, let us first identify their carrier. It will help us in developing the metaphysical model of the karma doctrine. The soul of a living being is a mundane soul as it has an association with the body which is made of matter. The soul leaves the body at the time of death of the living being. Is the departing soul a pure soul or a mundane soul? If it is going to take rebirth, it is a mundane soul which by definition has association with matter. In other words, the transmigrating soul has association with matter but we are unable to identify it with our senses and available scientific tools. It implies that matter associated with the transmigrating mundane soul must be in the form of subtle matter which cannot be identified with our senses and scientific tools. What could be the purpose of association of subtle matter

with the soul? We can get some clue from the DNA molecules which have the power to deliver genetic instructions used in the development and function of living beings. The main role of DNA molecules is the long-term storage of information. DNA is often compared to a set of blueprints as it contains the instructions needed to construct components of the body cells, such as proteins and RNA molecules. If the DNA molecules in association with a soul have such powers, it seems logical to assume that subtle matter in association with the mundane soul has power to deliver the invisible consequences of deeds. The metaphysical model of the karma doctrine makes use of another presupposition that subtle matter is the carrier of the invisible consequences of deeds.

But it raises a question about the source of subtle matter. Scientists believe that the entire space of the universe is filled with dark matter/dark energy composed of subtle matter. If this belief is accurate, then it seems logical to presuppose that the universe is packed with subtle matter. According to Jain metaphysics, one class of particles of subtle matter is called a karmic particle, which is similar to other subatomic particles like protons, neutrons, and electrons, except that karmic particles are thought to be much finer than the known subatomic particles. It is logical to assume that karmic matter is the carrier of invisible consequences of deeds.

Another question may arise regarding how karmic matter transforms into different species that carry different invisible consequences of deeds. Karmic particles are nonliving matter, but they transform into living matter after coming in contact with the mundane soul, just as do other particles of matter. The transformation of karmic particles into appropriate species of karma is similar to the digestion process. It is a well known fact that particles of food ingested

by a living being get transformed into different constituents of the body which remain in the body for different durations. Food particles are nonliving matter with no knowledge of that transformation. Food particles upon association with the soul transform into living matter that acquires the capability of transformation into different constituents of the body which remain in the body for different durations. Similarly, karmic matter upon association with the soul transforms from nonliving matter into living matter that acquires the capability of transformation into different species of karma that remain attached to the soul for different durations. We can, therefore, theorize that karmic matter is the material carrier of invisible consequences of deeds and has power to deliver them.

Nature of Invisible Consequences of Deeds

The invisible consequences of deeds affect the attributes of souls and living matter. Each species of karma carries a different invisible consequence of deeds, which in turn affects a different attribute of the soul and living matter. The nature of the effects of the invisible consequences of deeds is different for the intrinsic attributes than for the extrinsic attributes of souls and living matter. The intrinsic attributes of the soul are eternal and permanent; consequently, they cannot be altered. The invisible consequences of deeds only prevent the full manifestation of the intrinsic attributes of the soul by obscuring them in the same way as clouds obscure the sunlight. The extrinsic attributes of the soul and living matter are impermanent; hence, they are affected by the invisible consequences of deeds by interaction.

There are four species of karma that affect the three intrinsic attributes of perception, knowledge, and *virya* and the one extrinsic attribute of *moha* of the mundane soul. The attribute of bliss of the mundane soul is completely

obscured by *moha* and cannot be affected directly by karma. Bliss is affected indirectly through *moha* and manifests only when the soul liberates itself from *moha*. The three species of karma that prevent the full manifestation of the intrinsic attributes of perception, knowledge, and *virya* are respectively perception-obscuring, knowledge-obscuring, and *virya*-obscuring karmas. Due to the fruition of the perception-obscuring karma the mundane soul possesses only partial perception of the substances. The fruition of the knowledge-obscuring karma hinders the attainment of knowledge; the mundane soul possesses only the partial knowledge of the substances. The *virya*-obscuring karma prevents a living being from achieving its spiritual advancement. The fourth species, namely, nature-deluding karma affects the extrinsic attribute of *moha*, causing delusion regarding the true nature of reality and generating attachment/aversion.

Every living being is characterized by its physical features and the performance of its senses and instruments of physical action, which in turn are set apart by the four features of the extrinsic attributes of living matter: (1) physical nature of its senses, instruments of physical action, and respiration system; (2) age; (3) performance of its senses; and (4) performance of its instruments of physical action. Four additional species of karma affect these four features of the extrinsic attributes of living matter.

The fifth species, termed physique-determining karma, determines the number of senses, which in turn determines the types of senses, types of instruments of physical action, and type of respiration system, and provides the appropriate body, senses, instruments of physical action, and respiration system. The sixth species, termed age-determining karma, determines the duration of the embodiment. The seventh species, termed feeling-determining karma, affects the

performance of the senses and is responsible for mundane experiences of pain and pleasure. The eighth species, termed action-determining karma, affects the performance of the instruments of physical action, namely, body, speech, and mind and is responsible for the external conduct of the living being, to be discussed later.

It should be pointed out that each species of karma is further divided into subspecies. For example, the feeling-determining karma has two subspecies: pleasant-feeling-determining karma and unpleasant-feeling-determining karma. The details of the subspecies are beyond the scope of this book.

Most of us in our lives must have planned numerous times to commit various kinds of evils. We do such deeds because we think that they have no consequences. But our thinking is flawed. Such deeds do have invisible consequences which are not recognized by our physical senses. Though we have acquired the knowledge about the invisible consequences of deeds, we will still commit such evils unless we inculcate the knowledge of the invisible consequences of deeds. There is a significant difference between the knowledge about the invisible consequences of deeds and the knowledge of the invisible consequences of deeds. One can have the knowledge about a fruit by looking at its pictures and reading about it, but one has the knowledge of the fruit only when one touches, smells, and tastes it. One has the knowledge of invisible consequences of deeds only when one develops unconditional faith in it. Once we have the knowledge of the intangible, invisible consequences of deeds, it is likely that we will stop committing such evils.

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Chapter 5
Metaphysical Model

The basic elements of the metaphysical model of the karma doctrine are deeds, invisible consequences of deeds, and karmic matter that acts as the carrier and deliverer of the invisible consequences of deeds. But the concept of karmic matter as the material carrier of the invisible consequences of deeds raises the following questions: How does karmic matter come in contact with a soul? What are the factors that control the amount of karmic matter that comes in contact with a soul? How long does a species of karma remain attached to a soul? What are the factors that control the intensity of the effect of a species of karma at the time of its fruition? We will deal them one by one.

Karmic matter, which is much finer than the body cells of living beings, easily penetrates the body and collides with the body's cells that are always in an active state. The amount of karmic matter captured at any instant depends on the intensity of the pulsation of the body cells. The pulsation of the body cells is modulated by the physical action of the living being, which in turn is affected by the degree of volition with which the physical action is carried out. If the pulsation of the body cells is feeble, as would be the case during meditation, the amount of karmic matter captured is small. On the other hand, if the pulsation of the body cells is intense, as would be the case during rage and excitement, the amount of karmic matter captured is large. Thus it stands to reason that the amount of karmic matter that comes in contact with a soul increases in proportion to the degree of volitional activities of the living being.

A deed has two aspects: physical action and *moha*. The degree of volition with which the physical action is carried out, as described above, controls the amount of karmic matter that comes in contact with the soul and determines the different species of karma assumed by the undifferentiated karmic matter. *Moha* controls the time and intensity of fruition of karma. The liberation of the soul from the bondage of embodiment of a person who performs a deed with intense *moha* occurs later than a person who conducts the deed with mild *moha*. The time of fruition of karma, therefore, increases with the increase in the intensity of *moha*; the longer karma remains attached to the soul, the more delayed is the time of its liberation. In the same way, the intensity of the effects of karma increases with the increase in the intensity of *moha*.

In summary, karmic matter comes in contact with the soul and transforms into different species of karma which remain attached to the soul for different durations. At the end of their duration of attachment, karma executes the invisible consequences of the deed, detaches from the soul, and transforms back to karmic matter. The fruition of the old karma results in a new deed which, in turn, binds new karma and the cycle continues. The new karma performs another very crucial function, as explained in the ensuing section.

Interactive Karmic Field

The attached karma creates an interactive karmic field inside and around the living being. The karmic field is influenced by the newly attached karma of subsequent deeds which continuously and automatically "update" the karmic field and alter the nature of the old attached karma. Therefore, the nature of karma at the time of its attachment

to the soul need not be identical to its nature at the time of its detachment from the soul when it fructifies. In other words, the invisible consequence of the deed can be different than the consequence of karma.

Consider the following scenario. A man commits a heinous crime for which the time of fruition of the attached karma is so long that his soul will have to take several rebirths for its fruition. After committing the crime, the man repents his behavior and becomes a holy person. Though the man's conduct now is virtuous, he still will have to take several reincarnations to fructify the karma related to his heinous deed, unless his present and future deeds alter the invisible consequences of his past deed. Just as the sentence of a prisoner is reduced due to his or her good conduct, in a similar fashion the karmic field created by the past deed is modified by the newly attached karma. It would be impossible to dissolve the accumulated karma without the interaction of the newly attached karma with the karmic field of the past karma.

The storage of karma can be depleted by obstructing the inflow of the new karma and increasing the outflow of the matured karma. The obstruction of influx of the new karma is termed *samvara* (inhibition) and the detachment of the matured karma is termed *nirjara* (dissolution). The storage of karma is exhausted by the processes of *samvara* and *nirjara*.

In order to understand the mechanism of *samvara* of the new karma and *nirjara* of the past karma, we must analyze the interaction between the newly attached karma and the karmic field of the past karma. The attached karma can be considered as a load, termed "karmic load", which a

soul carries with it. The aim of our life is to reduce the karmic load to zero in order to transform our mundane soul into a pure soul. Karmic load is determined by four parameters, namely the amount of karmic matter, species of karma, time of fruition of karma, and intensity of fruition of karma. The newly attached karma of the new deeds affects the time and intensity of fruition of the old attached karma of the past deeds. A new deed whose newly attached karma increases the time and intensity of fruition of the old attached karma is termed an evil deed. By the same token, a new deed whose newly attached karma decreases the time and intensity of fruition of the old attached karma is termed a good deed.

The newly attached karma has the power to increase or decrease the time and intensity of fruition of the old attached karma through two processes, which are termed *udvartana* (augmentation) and *apavartana* (diminution). The increase of time and intensity of fruition of the old attached karma by the newly attached karma of the new evil deed is *udvartana*. In contrast, the decrease of time and intensity of fruition of the old attached karma by the newly attached karma of the new good deed is *apavartana*. Although the newly attached karma of our new deed fructifies in future, it instantly and automatically "updates" the karmic field so that we also experience its effect right along with our new deeds. The karmic field is analogous to the magnetic or electric field that occurs in the natural world.

After understanding the effect of the new deed on the past karma, we should be able to figure out the effect of the various processes on the attachment of the new karma to, and the detachment of the matured karma from, the karmic load. The better we understand these processes, the better we can control their mechanism and the faster we can

achieve our goal of liberation. Consider the following scenario. Suppose during the next few days you perform on average more good deeds than evil deeds. Your old karmic load goes down; consequently, the average time and intensity of fruition of your old karmic load decrease. There is only one way for karma to fructify in the shorter period; that is, on average a higher number of karmic particles should fructify. The average number of karmic particles detaching from the karmic field increases with *apavartana*. In other words, the good deeds increase *nirjara*. The decrease in the intensity of fruition of karma promotes more new good deeds, which in turn attach less karmic load. In other words, the good deeds increase *samvara*. The good deeds result in reducing the karmic load, which in turn promotes more good deeds that further reduce the karmic load, and the cycle continues.

The reverse must be true if you perform on average more evil deeds than good deeds. Your old karmic load goes up; consequently, the average time and intensity of fruition of your old karmic load increase. There is only one way for karma to fructify in the longer period; that is, on average a fewer number of karmic particles should fructify. The average number of karmic particles detaching from the karmic field decreases with *udvartana*. In other words, evil deeds decrease *nirjara*. The increase in the intensity of fruition of karma promotes more new evil deeds, which, in turn, attach more karmic load. In other words, evil deeds decrease *samvara*. The evil deeds results in increasing the karmic load which in turn promotes more evil deeds that further increase the karmic load, and the cycle continues.

The rate of reduction of the karmic load depends on the nature of the good deeds. All good deeds do not have the same effect on the karmic load. Suppose you donate some

of your wealth for a good cause. Donation for a good cause is considered a good deed. But it will reduce your karmic load even more if you donate your wealth anonymously rather than for achieving fame. The main criterion in classifying deeds is the degree of *moha* with which deeds are carried out. The milder the *moha*, the less undesirable are the invisible consequences of the deed.

Both evil as well as good deeds attach new karma. But good deeds decrease, and evil deeds increase, the old karmic load.

Metaphysical System

The karma doctrine is governed by the eternal and universal laws that cannot be tinkered with even by the Supreme Being. There is an innate moral order to the cosmos, which is self-regulating through the workings of the karma system as follows.

The universe is packed with karmic matter that is much finer than the body cells of living beings. Karmic matter easily penetrates the body cells. The amount of karmic matter captured by body cells due to the physical action of mind, body, and speech at any instant depends on the intensity of the volitional activities with which the physical action is performed. Karmic matter comes in contact with the soul and transforms into eight fundamental species of karma that carry different invisible consequences of deeds. Four species of karma affect the four attributes of the mundane soul. The other four species affect the extrinsic attributes of living matter. Due to *moha*, the different species of karma attach to the soul and remain attached to it for different durations. The duration of karmic bondage with the soul and the intensity of the effects of karma increase with the

increase in the intensity of *moha* with which the deed is performed. At the end of its duration of attachment, karma executes the invisible consequences of deeds, detaches from the soul, and transforms back into karmic matter. The fruition of the old karma results in new deeds which, in turn, bind the new karma and the cycle continues.

The accumulated karmas of past deeds create an interactive karmic field inside and around living beings. Although the newly attached karma of our new deeds fructifies in future, it instantly and automatically "updates" the karmic field so that we also experience its effect right along with our new deeds. The newly attached karma of new good deeds decreases the time and intensity of fruition of the old attached karma and increases *samvara* and *nirjara*. In contrast, the newly attached karma of new evil deeds increases the time and intensity of fruition of the old attached karma and decreases *samvara* and *nirjara*. We have the ability and power to control the interactive karmic load by controlling our new deeds, as explained in the next chapter.

Peculiarity of Karmic Bondage

Though the main cause of karmic bondage is *moha*, it takes the support of other means to manifest itself. Once we know the measures that control our karmic load and continue our shackle of incarnation, we can make an attempt to manage them. We can understand these measures through several examples.

One person shoots a deer with an arrow intentionally. Another person shoots a deer with an arrow unknowingly, by mistake. Both persons perform the same physical action, but with different intentions. A deed encompasses both physical action and intentions. It is logical to infer that the

increase in the karmic load should be more severe for the intentional killer than the other killer who shoots the deer unintentionally, by mistake.

Consider another example. Two persons watch the same theatric drama; one, with mild attachment and the other, with acute attachment. Is there going to be a difference in the increase in their karmic load? The person who watches the drama with acute attachment has a larger increase in the karmic load.

Think about this case in point. Two persons carry out the same action, which can be either virtuous or evil, but one with more fervor than the other. Are they going to have same increase in their karmic load? The increase in the karmic load is milder in the case of the less passionate person than the other.

In all these examples the two persons perform the same physical actions, but the increase in their karmic load is different depending upon whether they perform the action (1) with or without intention, (2) with acute or mild attachment, and (3) with more or less fervor. Though the mechanism of karmic bondage in these examples appears to be different, the chief cause for the difference in the karmic load is the relative intensity of *moha* with which the actions are performed.

We continue with some more examples. Suppose you play different roles in the performance of a deed. The karmic load varies with the type of role you play in that deed. The karmic load depends on whether you only think about performing the deed, you actually make preparations for performing the deed, or you physically begin to perform the deed. The deeper your involvement in the deed, the larger is the increase in your karmic load.

Consider three cases of your direct or indirect involvement in a deed: you perform the deed yourself, you cause someone else to perform the deed, or you only give your consent to someone else performing it. Your karmic load increases not only when you physically perform the deed, but also, to a lesser degree, when you indirectly participate in it. The more direct your association in the deed, the larger is the increase in your karmic load. We increase our karmic load not only when we ourselves perform a deed, but also when we provoke action, when we indirectly participate in or prepare for action, and also when we only give our consent.

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Chapter 6
Someone Sows, Someone Reaps

The proverb "Someone sows, someone reaps" is based on the established fact that we daily experience the effects of the others' deeds. When the head of a family either makes money or loses money in a business venture, the consequences affect the members of the family, and not just the head of the family. Consequences of the decisions of a nation's government officials affect the population of that nation, including the government officials themselves. Not only that, the consequences of actions of people of one nation can affect people of other nations. All these examples suggest that we bear the consequences, not only of our deeds, but also of others' deeds. But according to the karma doctrine, one bears only the invisible consequences of his or her own deeds. How does one reconcile the two situations which apparently contradict each other? Others' deeds and the visible consequences of our own and others' deeds do not affect us directly; they affect us through fruition of our karma. We need to understand causality in order to understand the process of fruition of karma, which in turn explains how others' deeds and the visible consequences of our own and others' deeds affect us.

Causality

Causality is defined as the relationship between one event or one mode of a substance (called cause) and another event or another mode of the same substance (called effect) which is the consequence of the former. The relationship between cause and effect can be explained through an illustration.

Consider an example in which you are a potter and you make a cup out of a lump of clay using a potter's wheel and other tools. You are the maker of the cup; hence, you are the cause of the cup and the cup is the effect. But it is not possible for you to make the cup without the lump of clay, the potter's wheel and other tools. It means that all of these elements, including you as the potter, are the causes of the cup. This example includes two modes of matter-the lump of clay and the cup of clay. These two modes of matter are related to each other. The lump of clay is a cause and the cup of clay is its effect.

There are more causes than one for the change in the mode of a substance. For our discussion we divide the causes into two kinds—material cause and efficient cause. The material cause is that which changes its own condition to bring about the effect. The effect is existent in the material cause. The efficient cause is that which does not change its own condition to bring about the effect. The effect is nonexistent in the efficient cause. In the earlier illustration, the lump of clay is the material cause as the lump of clay changes itself to create the cup of clay. The lump of clay is no longer there once the cup is created. The cup of clay was existent in the lump of clay. You as a potter, the potter's wheel, and all other tools are the efficient causes as they do not change their own condition to create the cup of clay. You, the potter's wheel, and the other tools are still there after the creation of the cup. The cup of clay was nonexistent in you, the potter's wheel, and the other tools. It should be noted that both the material and efficient causes need not be the same substance. In this example, matter (the lump of clay) is the material cause, and the soul (you as the potter) is the efficient cause.

Let us take another example which involves the modes of a soul. Suppose you acquire some knowledge of computers by attending a lecture given by a professor. It is the common understanding that the professor's lecture is responsible for the change in your knowledge; hence, the professor's lecture is the cause and the change in your knowledge is the effect. But this notion is not entirely correct. Only the invisible consequences of deeds of the doer can affect the attributes of the soul of the doer, and the professor's lecture is not the invisible consequence of the deed of the doer. The invisible consequence of the deed that affects the attribute of knowledge of the soul is the knowledge-obscuring karma.

What, then, are the material and efficient causes for the change in your knowledge? The current mode of your soul possesses knowledge, and your knowledge constantly changes with the mode of your soul. It was not possible for you to gain the knowledge of computers without the knowledge you had before attending the lecture. This example includes two modes of your soul: the mode of your soul before the lecture and the mode of your soul after the lecture. These two modes of your soul are related to each other. The mode of your soul before the lecture is the cause of the mode of your soul after the lecture. The mode of your soul after the lecture is the effect of the mode of your soul before the lecture. In this example, the mode of your soul before the lecture is the material cause of the change in your knowledge, as this mode of your soul changes into a different mode of your soul after the lecture. The consequence of the knowledge-obscuring karma is the efficient cause of the change in your knowledge. In this example, both the material cause (the mode of your soul before the lecture) and the efficient cause (the consequence

of the knowledge-obscuring karma) are individualistic; they affect you only, nobody else.

A question arises about the role of the professor's lecture in changing your knowledge. The answer to this question can be found by identifying the material and efficient causes of fruition of the knowledge-obscuring karma. The knowledge-obscuring karma and the professor's lecture are the material cause and the efficient cause of fruition of the knowledge-obscuring karma, respectively. The professor's lecture affects your knowledge indirectly through fruition of your knowledge-obscuring karma.

Moreover, the effect of the professor's lecture is not uniform on all the students in the class; its effect varies from one student to another. Although the professor's lecture is the efficient cause of fruition of the knowledge-obscuring karma of all the students in the class, the knowledge-obscuring karma of each student is different from one another. In this example the material cause of fruition of the knowledge-obscuring karma of every student is individualistic, but the efficient cause fruition of the knowledge-obscuring karma of every student is collective. The material cause (the knowledge-obscuring karma) affects the individual student, but the efficient cause (the professor's lecture) affects all the students. The material cause is always individualistic, but the efficient cause can be collective.

The consequence of karma not only depends on karma but also on the efficient cause of fruition of karma. The consequence of karma varies with the efficient cause of fruition of karma as illustrated in the following example. Consider the scenario where you attend a class on spirituality instead of on computers. You experience a change in your knowledge by attending the class but the change in your

knowledge in the class on spirituality is different than that in the computer class. Though the mode of your soul and the state of your knowledge-obscuring karma before the lecture as determined by the invisible consequences of your past deeds are the same in both scenarios, you experience a different change in your knowledge. The consequence of the knowledge-obscuring karma, i.e. the state of your knowledge after attending the lecture, is different when you attend the lecture on spirituality than computers. The efficient cause of fruition of the knowledge-obscuring karma is different in the two scenarios. It is the lecture on computers in one case and the lecture on spirituality in the other case. The modes of your soul after the lecture are different in the two scenarios. The difference is due to the difference in the efficient cause.

Now let us go back to the example of the lump of clay. It was possible for you to make a saucer, a bowl, or a vase from the lump of clay instead of the cup of clay. Though the lump of clay has the capacity to change into these different forms, it has no knowledge of these possible forms. The next form taken by the lump of clay depends on the desire of the potter and the availability of the potter's wheel and other tools. We apply the same logic to soul in the other example. It was possible for you to conduct many deeds other than attending the lecture. Your soul has the capacity to change into different modes. You have the capability to select the next mode of your soul; such is not the state of affairs in the case of the clay. This is the main difference in the process that controls the next mode in the animate and inanimate substances.

Fruition Process of Karma

Living beings are affected only if the attributes of their

soul and living matter are affected, which in turn are affected only by the invisible consequences of deeds, i.e. karma. Living beings constantly attach new karma and also constantly detach past karma after its fruition. The mode of karma, similar to the mode of every substance, is constantly being modified. The mode of karma is different before fruition than after its fruition. There are two causes of the change in the mode of our karma, i.e. the material cause and the efficient cause. Our karma, which is the invisible consequences of our past deeds, is the material cause of the change in its mode. Others' deeds or the visible consequences of our or others' deeds are the efficient cause of the change in the mode of our karma and affects the fruition of our karma, which in turn affects our new deeds. The role of others' deeds and the visible consequences of our and others' deeds on the fruition of karma will become clearer as we go through some illustrations.

Consider the situation where someone verbally abuses you. The verbal abuse is the deed performed by the other person. Let us consider two possible responses you may take. The first option is to react to the verbal abuse in the form of anger; and the second option is to ignore the verbal abuse. In the first option, your anger is the deed performed by you. The mode of your soul is the material cause of your deed of anger, and the fruition of your nature-deluding karma is the efficient cause of your deed of anger. The nature-deluding karma itself and the deed of the verbal abuse performed by the other person are the material cause and the efficient cause of fruition of the nature-deluding karma. It is a misconception that the deed of the verbal abuse by the other person is the cause of your anger and your anger is the visible consequence of the deed of the verbal abuse. Your deed of anger is the consequence of the mode of your

soul and the fruition of the nature-deluding karma of your past deed. The deed of the verbal abuse of the other person is only the efficient cause of fruition of your nature-deluding karma. It is your own choice to select the deed of the verbal abuse as the efficient cause of fruition of your nature-deluding karma. You could select the second option of ignoring the verbal abuse. In this case the verbal abuse does not act as the efficient cause of fruition of your nature-deluding karma, and you do not get angry. You have the control over the effect of the other's deed.

Consider the following illustration. A person has three sons, all of whom expect to inherit substantial wealth from their father. One day they learn that their father has lost all his wealth in the business. The business is the deed performed by the father, and the loss of wealth is the visible consequence of this deed of the father. The visible consequence of the deed of the father has different emotional effects on the three sons and the father. The eldest son becomes very angry and verbally abuses his father. The second son, though disturbed by the news, does not say anything to his father. The youngest son stays calm and consoles his father. The father is disappointed by his deed of business failure. It is the common misconception that the visible consequence of the deed of the father in the form of loss of wealth is the cause of emotional effects on the sons and the father. If the visible consequence of the deed of the father is the cause of their emotional effect, why does the same visible consequence of the deed have different emotional effects on them? Their emotional effect is the consequence of their nature-deluding karma of their past deeds. The visible consequence of the deed in the form of loss of wealth is only the efficient cause of fruition of their nature-deluding karma. They have different emotional effects

because the fruition of their nature-deluding karma is different. The efficient cause of fruition of the nature-deluding karma of the father is the visible consequence of his own deed. The efficient cause of fruition of the nature-deluding karma of the sons is the visible consequence of another's (the father's) deed.

Others' deeds or the visible consequences of our own or others' deeds act as the efficient cause of, and affect us through, the fruition of our karma of our past deeds. We only bear the consequence of our past deeds. Hence the statement that we bear only invisible consequences of our deed is correct. However, we have some freedom in selecting the others' deeds or the visible consequences of our or others' deeds that serve as the efficient cause of fruition of our karma. The extent of freedom is negligible in living beings with four or fewer physical senses. Animals with five senses have only a small amount of freedom while human beings have the maximum degree of freedom among living beings.

Fallacy

Many people have the incorrect notion that living like a recluse in a secluded place away from the visible consequences of deeds should be helpful in reducing the karmic load. There are two fallacies in their thinking. First, the physical absence of the visible consequences of deeds does not necessarily banish the mental presence of visible consequences of the deeds. For example, there is a person who verbally abuses you and he always makes you angry when you meet him. You think that you are not going to be angry if you live in an area where you do not meet him. But that is not going to happen. Though you do not have any physical contact with that person, the mere remembrance of past incidents will rritate you.

Secondly, there is a big difference between the absence of visible consequences of the deeds and the independence from visible consequences of the deeds. A person is independent of visible consequences of others' deeds if he or she is not affected by them when living amongst them. The absence of visible consequences of deeds is helpful only in inhibiting the attachment of new karma, but it does not speed up annihilation of the attached karma. The independence from visible consequences of deeds not only inhibits the attachment of new karma, it speeds up annihilation without fruition of the attached karma through the process of *apavartana*, which is essential for liberation. One has to fight the battle with karma in the presence of visible consequences of deeds.

Myth about Free Will

It is true that everything that happens is determined or caused by previously existing conditions, which in turn are caused by conditions prior to them and so on indefinitely back in time. For instance, our new deeds are determined by our old deeds. New deeds are the results of fruition of the old karmas, which in turn are the results of karmic particles attached to soul by old deeds. Though this piece of information about the fruition of karma is true, it tells only the partial truth, not the complete truth. The incomplete truth has given rise to the notion of fatalism or pre-ordination and has instigated the perception that there is no free will. Once we realize the complete truth, wrong notions about fatalism and free will die out.

The other piece of information that makes the truth about the fruition of karma complete is that fruition of karma not only depends upon the material cause of fruition of karma, but also on the efficient cause of fruition of karma. The

material cause of fruition of our karma is our karma itself which is determined by the karma doctrine. The efficient cause of fruition of our karma is other's deed, or visible consequences of our own or other's deed or an event. The efficient cause of fruition of our karma is not determined by the karma doctrine and has no relationships with our karma. We have freedom to pick the efficient cause of fruition of our karma.

As a matter of fact that is the only thing we do all our life; we pick the efficient cause of fruition of our karma. We pick our food, our clothes, and our friends and foes. We pick the entertainment programs we watch, the books we read, the discourses we listen to, and the work we do. All these different things we pick every day in our life are the visible consequences of our own and other's deeds and they serve as the efficient cause of fruition of our karma. For example, the food we eat is the efficient cause for fruition of our physique-determining (*nama*) karma; the book we read is the efficient cause of fruition of our knowledge-obscuring (*jnanavaraniya*) karma; and so on. It is a misconception that our new deeds are completely determined by our past deeds and there is no free will. The efficient cause of fruition of our karma that we choose with our free will significantly affects our deeds. By selecting the efficient causes of fruition of our karma we control our deeds. Because we have the freedom to select the efficient cause of fruition of karma, we are morally responsible for our deeds. As we gradually become independent of efficient cause of fruition of our karma, we get closer to liberation.

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Chapter 7
Enlightened Conduct

As long as there remain unfulfilled consequences of our past deeds in our present life, we have to take rebirth to bear the unfulfilled consequences of our deeds. Our goal in life is to attain liberation from the cycle of rebirth. The knowledge of the metaphysical model alone is not going to lead us to liberation unless we implement it in our daily life. Liberation is achieved by depleting the karmic load, which in turn requires inhibition of the influx of new karma and speedy annihilation of past karma. The attachment of karma to our soul is due to our physical actions and *moha*; therefore it follows that we can control the attachment of karma to our soul, and in turn the karmic load, by controlling our physical actions and *moha*.

Conduct that diminishes physical actions and *moha* is considered enlightened conduct. Conduct has, therefore, two aspects: external and internal. External conduct is related to physical action, which includes the activities of mind, speech, and body, which in turn are supported by the sensory system, respiration, and age. Therefore we can control our external conduct by molding the extrinsic attributes of living matter. The extrinsic attributes of living matter include five sensory systems, namely touch, taste, smell, vision, and hearing; three instruments of action, namely mind, speech, and body; respiration system; and age. Internal conduct deals with *moha*, which is the extrinsic attribute of soul. We can control our internal conduct by molding the extrinsic attribute of *moha* of the soul.

The control of internal conduct is more critical than that of external conduct. By controlling internal conduct, external

conduct is automatically controlled. But it is easier said than done to control internal conduct without controlling external conduct. However, one may control the external conduct without controlling the internal conduct. We can control our external conduct by leading our life with *samyama* (discipline and restraint) that has two aspects: *indriya samyama* and *prana samyama*. *Indriya samyama* means control over the sense organs of touch, taste, smell, vision, and hearing. *Prana samyama* deals with controlling the instruments of physical action (mind, speech, and body), respiration, and age. External conduct with *samyama* leads to minimization of *moha*, which is the root cause of karmic bondage.

Indriya Samyama

Indriya samyama requires that we control our sense organs to decrease our attachment to our body. A cursory scrutiny of our conduct in daily life shows that the reality is just the opposite. Consider the sense of touch. The tactile-sensory system feels temperature, hardness, roughness, and pressure. We have these feelings so that we can avoid hot, cold, hard, rough, and heavy substances that can injure our body. If we cannot sense heat, we are likely to burn our hand by touching a hot skillet. If we cannot sense cold, we are likely to have frostbite from exposing our body to freezing temperatures. If we cannot feel hardness and roughness, we are likely to injure our body lying down on hard and rough surfaces. The use of the tactile-sensory system to protect our body from getting injured is one thing, but its use to please and comfort our body is an entirely different matter. The use of simple clothes to protect our body is understandable, but the use of expensive designer clothes shows our attachment to our body. It is not only uneconomical to use expensive items; it increases our *moha*.

The same logic can be used for items such as ornaments, jewelry, and cosmetics that we use to beautify our body. Simple living and high thinking should be our motto for living.

The taste-sensory system gives the feeling of taste. We have this system so that we can avoid foods that harm the body. We should eat to live, not live to eat. When we live to eat, we tend to overeat and develop craving for foods that are less nutritious. Our craving for food increases our *moha*. Control over our taste buds is not only healthy for us; it diminishes our *moha* for our body.

The olfaction-sensory system causes the feeling of smell. Every physical substance has an odor. Odor by itself is not good or bad; we give it the label of good or bad. If an odor is pleasing to us, we call it a good odor; if it displeases us, we call it a bad odor. An odor which is pleasing to us need not be pleasing to others. We develop aversions for bad smells and attachment toward good smells. Once we have control over our olfaction-sensory system, we don't have any need for, or *moha* to, cosmetics and similar products.

The vision-sensory system is a relatively more critical system than other systems. Blindness can sharply limit our activities without assistance. The vision-sensory system enables us to read books and to watch entertainment programs. We need to have control over the vision-sensory system; otherwise we misuse it for reading unworthy books and watching demeaning entertainment programs. We end up not only wasting lots of money in such degrading activities, but increasing our *moha*.

The audio-sensory system deals with hearing. This system plays a crucial role in our daily communication.

The proper use or misuse of this system, similar to other systems, is controlled by us. We can use it to hear spiritual sermons that help to diminish our *moha* or music that increases our *moha*. We should have control over our five sensory systems so that we don't use them in activities that enhance our *moha*.

Prana Samyama

The other aspect of *samyama* is *prana samyama* that requires correct regulation of instruments of physical action, respiration, and age. As we use our sense organs to control our *moha*, similarly we should use instruments of physical action (body, speech, and mind) to control our *moha* that manifests itself in violence, falsehood, theft, unchastity, and acquisition. In other words, *prana samyama* requires that our deeds should be governed by five types of abstinence: abstention from injury or killing living beings, false or hurtful speech, theft or illegal and immoral transaction, unchaste sexual acts, and craving for and hoarding worldly possessions.

The logic behind *prana samyama* is that our conduct should be the same as we expect from others. We always prefer that other persons should not conduct any such deed that hurts us. Likewise, we should not perform deeds that will hurt others. We hurt others not by bodily injury alone, but in many other ways, including verbal and mental abuse. We should refrain from all kinds of harm to others: physical (killing, wounding, mutilating, and beating), verbal (speaking harsh and unpleasant words), and mental (harboring ill-feelings towards others). We should not harm not only human beings, but all living beings, as all of them hate pain. We should not harm, not cause others to harm, and not consent to harm, other living beings.

The world has limited natural resources. If we acquire more than our fair share of natural resources, then we are depriving others their fair share, causing suffering to them. Hence our conduct must be free from hoarding material possessions. We hurt others by lying, bearing false witness, using abrasive language, stealing their possessions, adulterating their commodities, and so on. Hence our conduct must be free from dishonesty, deception, falsehood, theft, illegal transaction, and so on. A sexual act between husband and wife is acceptable conduct, but we should refrain from unchaste sexual activities with the spouses of others, as it does harm them indirectly by augmenting their *moha.*

There are other conditions needed to consummate acceptable conduct. They are: carefulness in walking; carefulness in speech; carefulness in eating; and carefulness in handling things.

Our conduct is affected also by respiration. It is a matter of common experience that when we become emotional and tense, our breathing rate goes up. We can control our mental state by regulating the rate of breathing. The practice of proper breathing is one of the many techniques of meditation.

All living beings want to live forever. The age-determining karma controls the duration of the embodiment. There is no such deed whose invisible consequences increase our age. The only way to become immortal is by liberation. Of course, we can always shorten our life span by committing suicide or observing *samadhi-marana* which means death while in meditation. Having spent our life in pursuit of reducing karmic load, it behooves us to prevent the process of aging from undermining our *sadhana* (practice or discipline). Thus we should seek death by gradual fasting

when we are likely to fall away from our *sadhana* due to problems such as blindness, inability to walk without help, senility, or terminal illness. Any such problems are grounds for undertaking fast unto death.

It should be pointed out that *samadhi-marana* is not suicide. There is a major difference between suicide and *samadhi-marana.* The former always involves intense *moha*, malice, frustration, etc.; hence it results in increasing the karmic load. The latter does not involve *moha*; one merely withdraws conscientiously from eating and drinking in a gradual manner without disrupting one's inner peace. *Samadhi-marana* is a noble attempt to face death voluntarily in a peaceful, moral, and spiritual way, subjugating all *moha* by gradually abstaining from food and water. Nobody can avoid death, but one can learn the "art" of dying so that one dies without *moha*. Only those people who live a highly spiritual life are able to observe *samadhi-marana.*

Internal Conduct

Internal conduct deals with the extrinsic quality of *moha* of the soul. The root cause of *moha* is false belief. With false belief, the person does not discriminate between the soul and the body and has a mistaken belief that "I am this body." As long as we have this false belief, we remain attached to our body and develop all kinds of desires to make our body happy. Internal conduct is controlled by reforming the old habits of negative thinking, which in turn requires constant contemplation on the discriminative knowledge and repeated practices of self-disciplinary methods. Discriminative knowledge enables us to discriminate between the soul and the body. Once we gain that knowledge, we lose attachment with our body and rid ourselves of false belief.

Self-disciplinary methods are: confession and repentance of past misdeeds and negative thoughts; resolution to renounce the feeling of attachment to the body and worldly possessions and unrighteous conduct; and expiation through introspection, self-analysis, contemplation, meditation, and constant practice of wholesome moral conduct. Since it is difficult to change one's way of life, the exercise in introspection and self-discipline needs to be constantly practiced with perseverance; that alone can ensure that the mistakes of the past will not be repeated in the future. The powerful forces of sensual attractions, desire, and delusion constantly drag the soul to objects of sensual pleasures and lead to attachment towards physical objects. Hence, one should concentrate primarily on the destruction of *moha*, which is the root cause of all evils.

Suggestions

Every individual should devise his or her course of action. The following suggestions can be helpful in daily conduct.

Take initiative. Don't procrastinate. Do not use the excuse, "I am too busy." Is watching TV, movies, and other distracting performances more important than having peace in your life? Don't fool yourself that you watch only a few presentations of high cultural value. It should not be hard to give up debilitating shows for about thirty minutes and to devote that time instead to activities for spiritual development. Gradually reduce the time for watching meaningless shows and increase the time and priority for spiritual activities.

Be a vegetarian/vegan. Living a vegetarian/vegan life is sound not only for your body and mind; it is beneficial also

for the environment. It is the only way to sustain the ever-increasing population of the world. If you know how to cook vegetarian meals, you can make them more delicious than non-vegetarian meals. Don't eat any animal products for a period of two to three weeks and then feel the difference in your outlook. Once you pass this test, you will become vegetarian forever.

Perform nonviolent deeds. A deed that diminishes *moha* is termed a nonviolent deed. Don't hurt or injure any living being. Commit your full energy and capabilities to conduct nonviolent deeds. Slowly but steadily reduce attachment to worldly possessions. For example, if you own ten shirts, give up the shirt to which you have the most attachment and manage with nine. Gradually, dissolve *moha*.

Be an efficient cause for nonviolent deeds. You can never be the material cause of other's deeds. It is not in your control to be the efficient cause of other's deeds, but others can choose your deeds as the efficient cause of fruition of their karma. Conduct only such deeds which can be used by others as the efficient cause of fruition of their auspicious karma.

Contemplate. Introspect and self-analyze for self-reformation. Spend a few minutes each day to review your daily deeds. Acknowledge your mistakes and resolve not to repeat them in the future. Contemplate that you are not the body and that you have the potential of becoming a pure soul.

As you advance on the spiritual path, you will acquire the knowledge to attain liberation.

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Chapter 8
Questions and Answers

Question 1: Is the karma doctrine applicable only to human beings?

Answer: The short answer is no; the karma doctrine is applicable to all living beings, not just human beings. The doctrine is based on the presupposition that living beings are composed of two eternal substances, namely, soul and matter. In other words, matter and soul can neither be created nor destroyed. The number of souls in the universe is, therefore, fixed. The universe has no beginning and no end. The universe has been, and will remain, in existence for infinity (∞). If on the average α number of souls attain liberation in a unit time, the number of pure souls at the present time is $\alpha\infty$ and the number of mundane souls that will attain liberation in the future is also $\alpha\infty$. This means that the number of mundane souls in the universe must be $\beta\infty$, where $\beta>2\alpha$. Based on the scientific observation that millions of bacteria exist in a tiny space in the earth atmosphere, it is conceivable to have the number of mundane souls in the universe equal to $\beta\infty$.

The assumption that the karma doctrine is applicable only to human beings has two implications. The first implication is that the soul of humans is different than that of nonhumans, which is in contradiction with the presuppositions on which the metaphysical model of the karma doctrine is based. The second implication is that the number of human beings in the universe should be equal to $\beta\infty$, which is not supported by scientific information.

Though the mundane souls of all living beings have identical attributes, the living matter of living beings has no identical extrinsic attributes. Living beings with the number

of senses between one and four do not have a mind; hence, they have insignificant capability to modify their karma. They have no choice except to bear the consequences of karma. Animals with all the five senses have a mind, but their minds are not as advanced as those of human beings. They have limited capability to alter their karma, and they cannot achieve liberation. In contrast, human beings are the most developed living beings. They have the potential to alter their karmas and achieve liberation.

Question 2: Is the karma doctrine universal and eternal?

Answer: The universe and its constituents are eternal. Soul and matter are the two constituents of the universe; hence, they are eternal. Living beings are composed of soul and matter. Living beings perform deeds all the time wherever they reside in the universe. The doctrine would be meaningless if it is applicable only a part of the time and only in a portion of that universe where they reside. Hence the karma doctrine is universal and eternal.

Question 3: Is the karma doctrine based on empirical evidence?

Answer: Karmic matter is part of the dark matter/dark energy that fills the entire empty space of the universe. The dark matter/dark energy is so fine that it cannot be perceived by the available scientific instruments; hence, at present there is no empirical evidence of the karmic matter. However, the existence of dark matter/dark energy is supported by the current scientific theory.

Though science has made tremendous advancement in the field of molecular biology, still it cannot answer many phenomena. For example, why are certain genes "turned off" in only one twin who is identical to another? It is alleged that the physique-determining karma activates or silences genes. If that is so, then this conjecture may be taken as an empirical evidence of karma.

Question 4: Is the karma doctrine self-regulating or administered by God?

Answer: The answer depends whether the karma doctrine is based on logic or faith. Logic and faith seldom act together. The karma doctrine is self-regulating for those who believe that the universe and its constituents are eternal, as explained earlier. The karma doctrine is administered by God to those who have faith that the universe was created by God.

The followers of Jainism and Buddhism do not believe in God as the creator of the universe and as the administrator of the karma doctrine. They believe that every soul has the potential to attain liberation from the cycle of rebirth. They call the liberated soul Supreme Being, who is a knower and seer, not a doer. The karma doctrine for them is self-regulating.

On the other hand, the followers of Hinduism believe in God as a creator of the universe, and they believe that consequences of deed are awarded by God. The invocation of God to administer the doctrine raises questions that have no logical answers.

Question 5: Are the consequences of a deed borne by the doer of the deed only?

Answer: There are two types of consequences of deeds; invisible consequences and visible consequences. Invisible consequences of the deeds are universal and eternal and are, therefore, unique. They affect the attributes of soul and body of the doer of deeds. Hence, the invisible consequences of a deed are borne by the doer of the deed only. One does not bear the invisible consequences of others' deeds.

The visible consequences of deeds are based on man-made laws that are neither universal nor eternal. The visible consequences of deeds serve as the efficient cause of fruition of karma and affect the fruition of karma. The visible consequences of our deeds, as well as others' deeds, affect

us through the fruition of our karma only if we select them as the efficient cause of fruition of our karma. The effect of the visible consequences of deeds varies from person to person, because visible consequences of deeds affect karma that varies from one living being to another. For example, a specific physical object, which is the visible consequence of anybody's deed, can be a means of pleasure to one person and pain to another person, because the physical object serves as the efficient cause of fruition of the pleasant-feeling-determining karma of the former and the unpleasant-feeling-determining karma of the latter.

Question 6: What fundamentally distinguishes different transmigrating souls from one another?

Answer: Transmigrating souls carry karmic matter with them. Karmic matter distinguishes one soul from the other as no two souls carry identical karmic matter.

Question 7: Are the consequences of deeds borne in future lives?

Answer: The duration of fruition of karma depends on the intensity of *moha* with which a deed is carried out. The duration of fruition increases with the increase in the intensity of *moha*. If one conducts a deed with intense *moha*, the duration of fruition of karma can be long enough so that its consequences are not borne in the present life but in a future life.

Question 8: Where do the invisible consequences of deeds reside?

Answer: The invisible consequences of deeds reside in karmic matter attached to the soul.

Question 9: Can the invisible consequences of the deeds be avoided?

Answer: Karma (the invisible consequences of the deeds) cannot fructify without efficient cause. Others' deeds or the

visible consequences of our own or others' deeds serve as the efficient cause of fruition of karma. We can control the fruition of karma by selecting others' deeds or the visible consequences of our own and others' deeds that serve as efficient cause of fruition of our karma. We can avoid invisible consequences of the deeds only if we become independent of others' deeds and of the visible consequences of our own and others' deeds.

Question 10: Is the karma doctrine deterministic?

Answer: The term deterministic has a variety of meanings. In the present context the karma doctrine is deterministic if the new deeds of a person are determined by the old deeds of that person. New deeds are the result of fruition of the old karma, which, in turn, are the result of karmic particles attached to the soul by old deeds; consequently, the karma doctrine is deterministic.

Question 11: What is the role of the free will if the karma doctrine is deterministic?

Answer: The fruition of the old karma not only depends on karma, but also on the efficient cause of their fruition. The efficient cause of fruition of the old karma is not decided by the old deeds; it is chosen by the doer of the deeds by using his or her free will. Consider the example in which you acquire some knowledge of computers or spirituality by attending the lecture given by the professor. The knowledge-obscuring karma and the professor's lecture are the material cause and the efficient cause of fruition of the knowledge-obscuring karma, respectively. But the professor's lecture, which is the efficient cause, is chosen by you, not by your old deeds. You have the free will to select the efficient cause. The consequence of knowledge-obscuring karma, i.e. the state of your knowledge after attending the

lecture, is different when you attend the lecture on computers than spirituality. The efficient cause of the fruition of the knowledge-obscuring karma is different in the two scenarios. It is the lecture on computers in one case and the lecture on spirituality in the other case. The mode of your soul after the lectures is different in the two scenarios. The difference is due to the difference in the efficient cause. The fruition of the old karma depends on the efficient cause which is decided by the doer using his or her free will, not by the old deeds.

Question 12: Is "untimely" death due to past deeds?

Answer: People die "untimely" deaths in mishaps such as airplane or automobile accidents, earthquakes, floods, tsunami, and epidemics. Such mishaps are not governed by the karma doctrine; consequently the "untimely" death cannot be due to the past deeds of the dead person. The life duration of a living being is controlled by the age-determining karma. The life duration is shortened if the entire age-determining karma fructifies before its due time. The process of early fruition of karma is called *udirana* (premature realization). The material and efficient causes of the "untimely" death are the mode of the living matter of the dead person just before death and the *udirana* of the age-determining karma, respectively. The material and efficient causes of the *udirana* of the age-determining karma are the age-determining karma and the mishap, respectively. The mishap serves as the efficient cause of the *udirana* of the age-determining karma. It seems logical to assume that a moment before death the nature-deluding karma manifests with such a high intensity that its interaction with the stored age-determining karma results in the *udirana* of the age-determining karma.

Question 13: Many diseases in children are caused by genes inherited from parents, which means that children have no control over what they inherit. Why should they bear the consequences of their parents?

Answer: The kinds of genes a living being will have in the embodiment are controlled by the physique-determining karma, not by the parents. The physique-determining karma has the capabilities to locate the parents who can match the genes required by the physique-determining karma. The functions of the genes are controlled also by the physique-determining karma.

Question 14: Can one person share the consequences of another person's deeds?

Answer: The invisible consequences of a deed are always individualistic; consequently, they are borne only by the doer of the deed. However, the visible consequences of a deed can be collective; consequently, they can affect a person other than the doer of the deed if the person chooses the visible consequences of the other's deed as the efficient cause of fruition of his or her karma.

Question 15: Which species of karma is responsible for the health of a person?

Answer: The physique-determining karma determines the health of a person.

Question 16: What is the function of medical intervention if the health of the person is determined by the physique-determining karma?

Answer: Medical intervention is the efficient cause for the fruition of the physique-determining karma. The effect of medical intervention is not uniform on all persons; its effect varies from one person to another, because the physique-determining karma of each person is different from one another.

* * *

Glossary of Sanskrit Words

apavartana (diminution; process that hastens the time and decreases the intensity of karmic fruition)

indriya samyama (control of sense organs)

kevalin (one who has attained perfect knowledge)

moha (delusion; misperception-cum-attachment/aversion)

nirjara (dissolution; dissociation of karma)

prana samyama (control of instruments of physical action, respiration, and age)

sadhana (practice; discipline)

samadhi-marana (ritual death by fasting)

samvara (inhibition; the stoppage of karmic influx)

samyama (discipline and restraint)

udirana (premature fruition of karma)

udvartana (augmentation; process that delays the time and increases the intensity of karmic fruition)

virya (spiritual power; willpower)

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